

The following plan includes simple but critical steps to ensure your safety. Just print it out, and complete each section to the best of your abilities. If you wish to save this PDF file, we recommend doing so on a computer not accessible by your abuser.

Remember to review this document often.
And keep it in a place only you know.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING FOR SAFETY

Date: _____ Review Dates: _____

STEP 1: SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT. Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, abused women may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- If I decide to leave, I will _____. (Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) _____ in order to leave quickly.
- I can tell _____ about the violence and request that s/he call the police if s/he hears suspicious noises.
- I can teach my children how to call 911 or 0 to contact the police and/or the fire department.
- I will use _____ as my code word with my children and/or my friends so they can call for help.
- If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____. (Decide this even if you think there will not be a next time.) If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.
- I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is the lowest risk, such as _____. (Try to avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen, and other rooms with weapons or rooms without access to an outside door.)
- I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what is necessary to calm down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.
- I will also use the following strategies: _____.

STEP 2: SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE. Abused women frequently leave the residence they share with the abusive partner. Abusers often strike back when they believe their partner is leaving the relationship.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so that I can leave quickly.
- I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.



- I will open a savings account by (date) _____ in order to increase my independence. I will have statements of the account sent to _____.
- Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

- The domestic violence program's hotline number is _____.
- I can keep change for phone calls with me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the next month's bill will tell my abuser those numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to let me use his/her telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave. I will _____.
- I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- I can leave extra clothes with _____.
- I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- I can also _____.

STEP 3: SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE. There are many things a woman can do to increase her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- I can install a new garage door opener.
- I can purchase rope ladders to be used to escape from second floor windows.
- I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/minister/family/other) in the event that my partner abducts the children.

- I will tell people who take care of my children who has permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 School _____
 Day Care Staff _____
 Baby-sitter _____
 Sunday School Teacher _____
- I can inform (neighbor) _____, (pastor) _____, and (friend) _____ that my partner no longer resides with me, and they should call police if he is seen near my residence.
- I can also _____.

STEP 4: SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER. Many abusers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps I can take to enforce my protection order.

- I will keep my protection order _____ (location). Always keep it in or near your person. If you change purses, the protection order should be the first thing to go in.
- I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community in which I live.
- I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about the above bulleted item or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend, _____, and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.
- If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get a certified copy from the courthouse by going to _____ located at _____.
- If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- If the police do not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and file a complaint with the police.
- I can also file a criminal complaint with the prosecutor of the jurisdiction where the violation occurred. I can charge my abusive partner with a violation of a protection order and all the crimes committed in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.
- I can also _____.

STEP 5: SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC. Each abused woman must decide if and when she will tell others that her partner has abused her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help protect you. Each woman should carefully consider which people to ask to help her secure safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work of my situation.
- I can ask _____ to screen my phone calls at work.
- When leaving work, I can _____.
- When driving home, if problems occur I can _____.
- If I use public transportation, I can _____.
- I can use different grocery stores and shopping ,malls to conduct my business, and I can shop at different hours than I did when living with my abuser.
- I can also _____.

STEP 6: SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION. Most people in this culture consume alcohol. Many consume mood-altering drugs. Much of this consumption is legal, and some is not. The legal ramifications of using illegal drugs can be very hard on an abused woman, may hurt her relationship with her children, and may put her at a disadvantage in other legal problems with her abusive partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. But, beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her abuser. Furthermore, the abuser may use alcohol or drug consumption as an excuse to be violent. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol use, a woman needs to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with my abuser, I can enhance my safety with some or all of the following.

- If I am going to consume, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- I can also _____.
- If my partner is consuming, I can _____.
- I might also _____.
- To safeguard my children, I might _____ and _____.

STEP 7: SAFETY AND MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH. The experience of being abused and verbally degraded by a partner is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____
_____.
 - When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____
_____.
 - I can try to use "I can ..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
 - I can tell myself _____." whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
 - I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
 - I can call _____ and _____ as other resources of help to me.
 - Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____

_____.
 - I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program, or I can _____
or _____.
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STEP 8: ITEMS TO TAKE WHEN LEAVING. When a woman leaves her partner, it is important to take certain documents with them. Beyond this, a woman may want to give an extra set of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.

On the following list, items with an asterisk (*) are the most important items to take. These items might be place in one location so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. If there is time, before leaving the other items may be taken and stored outside the home.

When I leave, I should try to take:

- * Identification
- *Children's birth certificates
- *My birth certificate
- *Social security cards
- *Abuser's social security and license plate numbers
- *School and vaccination records for children
- *Money
- *Checkbook and ATM card
- *Credit cards
- *Keys -house/car/office
- *Driver's license and registration
- *Medications
- *Work permits
- *Green card
- Welfare Identification
- Passport(s)
- Divorce/custody papers
- Medical records for all family members
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Bankbooks
- Insurance papers
- Insurance papers
- Small objects I can sell
- Address book
- Pictures
- Jewelry
- Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- Special items of sentimental value

TELEPHONE NUMBERS I NEED TO KNOW:

- Police department (home) _____
- Police department (work) _____
- Police department (school) _____
- Domestic violence hotline _____
- Justice system advocate _____
- County registry of protection orders _____
- Work number _____
- Supervisor's home number _____
- Spiritual advisor _____
- Counselor _____
- Other _____

